

THE ROLE OF NIGERIA

IN

THE THIRD WORLD

(Being an address to the conference of the National
Union of North Eastern State Students)

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By

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel highly honoured to be called upon to address you on 'The role of Nigeria in the Third World'.

I shall first deal with the phenomenon known as 'Third World' and the roles that can be played in it by national leaderships. Then I shall examine the leadership of Nigeria so far and why she had played a role that to patriots and men with deep social conscience has been uninspiring.

When one talks of a 'role' one is referring to the part or parts that may be played or are being played towards the attainment of a goal. Where the goals to be pursued are numerous, as they usually are in society, their arrangement in order of priority is a crucial task. This order proceeds from feeling, understanding and insight: from what may be called social or historical vision.

The role, therefore, that a country can play at any stage of world history depends on

a) the insight which the leaders have into the character and direction of the dominant processes of world history at that time.

b) their understanding of the situation of their country, namely, the possibilities, impossibilities and options before it.

Since roles are played towards a goal, the best insight leads to the most valid, the most inspiring choice of goals and priorities. Man is great when he is inspired; mediocre when he is not. Depending on the goals on which a leadership orientates itself, its role in man's affairs in a given epoch may be positive or negative, loyal or treacherous, inspiring or humdrum.

The Hierarchy of Aims

I believe you will agree with me that we in Nigeria do not desire a world divided into 'First', 'Second' and 'Third', especially if we have to be in the 'Third'. It would seem that those who have concentrated their energies on seeking 'one world' are the most far-sighted.

Yet the one-ness of the world is not the thing that is absent in the contemporary situation. The world has been one for nearly a hundred years. Since the rise of the imperialist world system in the late nineteenth century, the world has been one world, but it has been a house

divided against itself. it has been like the household of a slave-owner, divided into master and servant, lord and slave, oppressor and oppressed.

From the 1880s to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 we had a world that was the exclusive household of imperialism. In that world, powerful imperialist nations (Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Czarist or Imperial Russia and Imperial Japan) exploited and oppressed at will the less powerful. In that world, the white race exploited and oppressed the other races, capitalist exploited and Oppressed workers, various overlords and gentry exploited and oppressed peasants, men dominated, exploited and oppressed women in all parts of the world. This uneven and unjust world order, although now tottering, continues to be a monstrous presence.

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, however, challenged this order. It was not a revolution aimed only at smashing Czarist Russian autocracy and imperialism; it was the first revolution in history to put on the agenda of the day the abolition of all exploitation of man by man.

This has become the leading aim in the contemporary world situation.

There are those, these days, who think of economic development or economic planning as the primary aim of nations in this epoch. There are two arguments against this view.

First, so long as imperialism exists nations in its orbit cannot develop as rapidly as they can once they have thrown off the imperialist yoke. In fact, the industrial countries have been developing faster than the underdeveloped countries in the capitalist orbit. This is due to exploitation by giant imperialist world monopolies and the fact that the national government cannot pursue a free economic policy in the national interest against these monopolies.

Secondly, even if the country is developed industrially, the cases of Western Europe, the United States, Japan and South Africa have shown that great wealth and poverty can exist side by side. Mass poverty is not abolished if, as in Nigeria, Brazil or India, the process of industrialisation means the creation of millionaires out of the poverty and misery of the people.

It is about time we should cease posing the problem of the world and of our country as if filling stomachs were enough, and as if even this filling of stomachs could be done in the midst of slavery. How many of us would like to be well-fed slaves rather than free men?

Freedom has been a primary aim of man in all ages. This is why wherever there has been oppression or domination there has also been struggle by the oppressed or the subjugated against it. In our time the struggle for freedom has been universalized, intensified and deepened.

It has been universalized because the struggle for it is now a world-wide programme, consciously pursued by communists, other socialists, liberals and national liberation patriots all over the world. It has been intensified because all means, including scientific means, are being used in its pursuit, and organisations for this purpose are consciously set up and nourished and people are consciously and systematically educated and mobilised towards their liberation. It has been deepened because the programme of liberation now includes the liberation of all races from racial oppression, of all nationalities from national oppression, of women from male chauvinistic oppression. In short, the aim of the liberation movement now encompasses the abolition of all exploitation of any person or group of persons by another.

Any leadership that is not orientated on this advanced conception has missed the first boat of our epoch of strife and change.

The primary question before men is universal freedom, interpreted as the abolition of all exploitation of man by man.

The World Situation

What are the dominant processes into the world that a leadership needs to understand?

Our epoch is a revolutionary one par excellence. Its contents is the disintegration of the capitalist world system and the rise of a new civilisation. The socialist world system. The old world is tottering. Mankind is questioning and throwing overboard a political, social or cultural solution which divides men into millionaires and paupers, privileged and underprivileged, powerful and powerless, exploited, oppressor and oppressed.

From 1917, the capitalist world system, that is imperialism, began to disintegrate. As already noted, this began with the Bolshevik Revolution. Since the Second World War, however, the German Democratic Republic of Poland, Hungary,

however, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Rumania in Europe, the Chinese People's Republic, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia in Asia and Cuba in America have effected the socialist revolution and have made or are making the revolutionary transition to socialism. These countries constitute the socialist world system.

Thus in the world situation we have the leading or industrial countries of the capitalist world system as the 'First' world, namely, the capitalist countries of Western Europe, Canada and the United States of America. The countries of the emerging socialist world system constitute the 'Second World' in the original connotation of the term.

The 'Third World' is an equivocal category. It was first used to distinguish those countries of the world that belonged neither to the industrialised capitalist group nor to the socialist group. Nowadays, however, the term has come to mean all underdeveloped countries, whether they are going the socialist way or not.

Since there are now industrialised socialist countries such as the USSR, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Poland, let us use 'Third World' to mean all underdeveloped countries. This will include in the 'Third World' the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and Cuba, which are socialist countries but underdeveloped.

Among Third World countries so defined we find four categories. First, there are the countries just mentioned.

Secondly, we find countries where movements attempting radical revolutions that looked forward to a socialist transition were smashed by the combined machinations of imperialist forces and local conservative and privileged interests. These countries include Greece, Guyana, Guatemala, Dominica, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Indonesia, Ghana and Mali.

Thirdly, we find a group of countries where forces heading towards socialism occupy strong positions. Examples of these are Tanzania, Guinea, Laos and Portugal.

Fourthly, we find a group of countries following vacillating or essentially capitalistic policies. Such countries include Sadat's Egypt, India and Nigeria.

The disintegration of the capitalist system is taking place under the impact of two revolutions: the colonial or national liberation revolution and the socialist revolution and the socialist revolution. Both revolutions have scored gigantic achievements.

The two revolutions are linked by the fact that they are antitheses of capitalism. The socialist revolution is an antithesis of capitalism as such, an effort to abolish capitalist exploitation as well as all exploitation. The colonial revolution is a revolt against the international aspect

of capitalism, that is, against capitalist imperialism.

Since the two revolutions are linked as antitheses to capitalism, it becomes possible for the colonial revolution to so radicalise that it has on its agenda both national liberation and the building of socialism on the attainment of Independence.

The carrying over of the national democratic revolution into a socialist revolution has been attained and is being attempted in many countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Alternatives

Thus in the world situation, two roads are open to a country of the 'Third World'. It may choose to try to go capitalist, or it may go socialist. Leaders of the 'Third World' who opt for capitalism do not see the full implications and the full opportunities of the contemporary world situation. They may 'modernise' in the sense of building some schools, universities, industries, etc. To the extent that they do this their steps are, on the surface, progressive. These steps, however, are like the choice of a man who has a new lorry but chooses to transport tons of loads using bicycle. Such a man too, will do somewhat better than a man on foot, but on the whole he is a foolish man.

From the point of view of a nation, the capitalist road is a national disservice, for it cannot even lead to the complete independence of a Third World country and it loses for the country enormous historical opportunities for experiment in freedom. It is not an accident that after World War II the socialist countries of the Third World have been developing much faster than the capitalist countries in their economy political maturity and culture.

From the point of view of the people, the capitalist road is unjust because it is a road of building up private fortunes out of the sweat of the people.

The Path of the Present Leadership

Let us be clear about certain things. When we speak about 'Nigeria' we must distinguish between the masses of the Nigerian people and her official or government leaders. The policy are called 'Nigerian' policy is actually the official policy of the Nigerian government at any one time. This may or may not reflect the wishes of the majority of people.

In any class society, official policies reflect the standpoint of a powerful section of the ruling elite. The outlook and philosophy of government implicit in governmental policies is the ideology of the governing elite.

Only if a government is put in power by popular forces and not by special interests will its philosophy coincide with that of the people at large. Infact, in many parts of the world, the outlook of the government and its supporting elite is quite in conflict with that of the people.

Nigeria, whether under the civilian or the military regime, is governed by an elite. That elite consists of the traditional nobility who are still very powerful in matters of local government, the business tycoons whose interests greatly influence economic policy, and the intelligentsia, consisting of intellectuals, educated professionals and bureaucrats (civilian and military administrators). These constitute the policy makers.

How does it come about that the Nigerian elite consists largely of people whose horizon is limited to capitalist development and whose social conscience and patriotism ranges from nil to minimal?

The basic answer lies in the fact that the struggle for independence in this country never reached a stage of radicalisation or awareness in which the interests of the people became paramount.

Unlike other Black African countries, an embryonic bourgeoisie of businessmen and professionals had already developed in Nigeria before the British colonial regime was ready to hand over power.

This bourgeoisie, the traditional aristocracy and the civil service bureaucrats aimed only at stepping into the shoes of the British colonial overlords. The colonial masters read correctly the interests of the new masters and arranged to hand over political authority to them peacefully.

The result is that members of the elite, since independence, have concentrated on the problem of sharing power and the wealth of the country, and falling over one another in doing so.

The capitalist path offers the opportunities to the elite of developing into wealthy men at the expense of Nigerian tax payers, helpless consumers and the country's labouring force in mineral production, in agriculture and in industry. That is why the capitalist path is popular with all opportunists, careerists, selfish individualists and men without a patriotic conscience.

A national liberation movement can go over to socialism only if there is no national bourgeoisie with whom imperialists can make a deal, and if the resistance of imperialism to national liberation is so stubborn that it becomes necessary to organise, mobilise and arm the people in an all-out struggle. In such a situation, new leaders emerge from among the people. The people develop a new militancy and can act directly in their own interest and not as appendages or camp followers of an elite relatively detached from them. Such a development of a radical, grass-root people's resistance movement against oppression never developed in this country.

The result is that, by and large, it is not patriots, men fired with a will to serve, men who have learnt the lesson of sacrifice

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incorruptible: by and large, it is not such men that rule Nigeria. There may be exceptions here and there. We are speaking of the general rule.

Limitation and Misdirections

With the situation as it is, however, with the country by the ruling elite on the road of capitalist development, there are definite limits to what can be achieved.

Let us look at some important policy areas. The various Nigerian government, including the current ones, have been pursuing a policy that widens the gap between rich and poor, a policy of creating millionaires out of the sweat of ordinary people. Consequently, if this government wants an end to corruption, it cannot have it, because the policy of promoting capitalism either generates or perpetuates greed and corruption. If the government wants an end to tribalism and nepotism, it cannot attain this goal, because tribalism and nepotism are used as instruments of confusion, blackmail and parasitic contests by various persons grabbing for wealth and position.

If this government wants peace and stability, it cannot come by it, because exploitation and growing inequality generate contradictions, hatreds and conflicts. If this government wants patriotism, it cannot get it, for what does Nigeria mean when those who serve her least get on best, according to the prevalent bourgeois standards of what constitutes 'getting on'? If this government wants sacrifice, it cannot have it forthcoming, for in a country where greed reigns, sacrifice is nothing but the self-emulation of a fool.

Now, the external and internal policies of a government are linked, since they spring from the same philosophy and serve the same ends.

Because Nigeria pursues a policy of capitalist development it finds that at best it can take but an equivocal stand in foreign affairs. On the whole, Nigeria's foreign policy is to accommodate imperialism as far as this is possible.

Because the world is generally in a revolutionary state, even the governments of Izreal and Taiwan sometimes oppose this or that aspect of United States policy, for instance. Yet these countries, as everyone knows are more outposts of United States imperialism. The Nigerian governments are subject to the pressure of world events as well as the pressure of patriotic Nigerian popular opinion. Subject to limited meanders that may be made because of these pressures, the Nigerian governments so far have remained instruments of British imperialism in Africa and the Third World.

While the United African Company, the Shell-British Petroleum Company, Barclays and Standard Banks and other British Companies dominate Nigeria industry, finance and commerce, it

is impossible for Nigeria to do anything against imperialism except the minimum that is simply inevitable owing to pressures coming from a more revolutionary world and a more revolutionary mass conscience.

Let us take the problem of corruption. The countries of the Third World that are in the capitalist orbit are all ridden with corruption. Since the blind cannot lead the blind, a corrupt Nigeria cannot point the way out of corruption for the Third World. The same goes for the endemic diseases of capitalist society, such as mass poverty, prostitution overcrowding in cities, unemployment, and inflation.

Let us take another Third World problem. In the World imperialist process, colonial countries were formed by grabbing the territories of several nationalities or tribes in Africa or Asia and constituting these into colonies. Most of the countries of the Third World in Africa and Asia are results of this process. Consequently, they have the problem of national cohesion, of knitting together various traditional nationalities and cultures into a modern nation

The example of Nigeria has not been particularly inspiring in this respect. All over the world, Nigeria serves as the leading example of ethnic conflicts and tribal politics. So long as Nigeria develops capitalistically this is bound to remain so. For the Ibo and Yoruba bourgeois groups, fired by nascent capitalistic ambitions, want to dominate the politics of the country. The elite of the other ethnic groups, traditional or other, find themselves ranged in opposition to them either in their own selfish local elite interests or in the genuine local fear of ethnic domination.

It is little wonder that Nigeria is a notorious victim of ethnic chauvinism. This chauvinism is fanned on by imperialist propaganda, for ever playing its accustomed game of divide and rule. By supporting capitalist development in Nigeria, imperialism strokes up the greed, contradictions and antagonisms that keep tribalism on the boil. The aim of imperialism here is to make it impossible for anything like an intense, dedicated and intransigent patriotism to emerge. It is to make it impossible to have a really national leadership that can put Nigeria before all things.

Having succeeded so far, imperialist propagandists not infrequently turn round to pile blames on the Nigerian people, presenting them as a people incapable of unity. They say in effect: "Look at that! A modern nation created by the virtues of Pax Britannica out of a congeries of warring tribes

are sinking back into the bog of tribal feud!" The aim of all that is to discourage and weaken the biggest nation in Africa, in order to count on her impotence, docility or even alliance and use her example in the massive campaign to discourage, divide and confuse the leaders and people of the Third World.

Real, democratic, spontaneous national unity must be distinguished from a so-called 'unity' bureaucratically imposed and based on the suppression of popular aspirations. For authentic unity, a country of the Third World needs an inspired leadership. But only a selfless, incorruptible leadership, dedicated only to serving the country and her people can be an inspiring leadership. To whom can rogues, a greedy fraternity of would-be millionaires, a crowd of selfish individualists, a collection of corrupt and nepotistic opportunists - to whom in the Third World can such a bunch of people serve as an inspiring example?

If we form youth corps a thousand times over but remain capitalistic in our orientation, we shall never have national unity. In the course of recent events around Udoji, General Gowon and other military officers appealed to capitalists, expatriate and indigeneous, not to intensify the exploitation of the people. Yet everyone knows that such appeals only express pretty sentiments of altruism that go nowhere. You cannot appeal to a tiger not to make a meal of a lamb or beg a mosquito not to suck blood. In the circumstance where the elite consider the country only a fleshy lump of beef for their carving knives appeals to exploited groups like the working class to show patriotism only adds mean insult to injury.

No country can be truly united in the world today unless its leadership dedicates itself to the cardinal task before all nations in our epoch: the abolition of all exploitation of man by man.

Multinational Third World countries such as Tanzania or Guinea, whose leadership are so dedicated, are united. Others like India, Kenya or Nigeria, whose leaders seek to perpetuate exploitation pass from one internal conflict to another either in the sense of ethnic confrontation or in that of warring classes.

Let us turn once again to the economic question.

As we have said imperialists and other exploiters want the world to believe that economic development is the primary aim worthy of Third World countries. Yet even Nigeria offers no inspiring example.

That the Nigerian economy has been performing on the whole better than government plans shows that the plans are timid. They far from mobilise the vast potentialities of the country in any way remotely approaching the limits of possibility available in her situation. All economists know that the elegance of a plan on paper is one thing and its execution another, and the latter is the crucial issue.

The execution of Nigerian plans has been notorious for its failures. The reason for this is not, as government and the planners think, that there is not adequate personnel, although that is the case. Four basic reasons are paramount. First, you cannot plan and adequately execute supposedly national plans in a capitalist economy. The capitalists are interested in themselves not in the country. Secondly, you cannot successfully plan for national purposes an economy that is essentially in foreign hands. Thirdly, you cannot use a corrupt, bureaucratic, sluggish, paper-heavy and nepotistic colonial civil service to execute economic plans. Fourthly, no plans can fully mobilise the potentialities of a country unless the people themselves are fully mobilised.

At the end of the last plan even the government admitted that the manufacturing sector fell short of expected performance. In other words, with all our excellent potentialities even the timid rates set for industrialisation, rates which depend on the funds and wishes of colonialist entrepreneurs, are not being achieved. Apart from mineral oil, the rest of the productive sectors - mining, agriculture and manufacturing have stagnated or merely crawled along.

All growth economists know that in the present world situation the industrialised countries, including the imperialist countries of NATO, are growing faster than less developed countries in the capitalist world orbit. Side by side with this, let us remember that progress in education and many other aspects of modernisation depends on the rate of economic advance. Again, let us remember that independence means nothing without the capacity to defend it. If you cannot make your own weapons, you are a slave or virtual slave, whether you like it or not. The day when equality of nations can exist without equality of armed power has, unfortunately, not yet arrived.

And since we are on the African continent, let us remember that South Africa, in collaboration with her imperialist allies, is arming to the teeth. She does so, let us note, because Africa is the last stronghold of oppression on earth. This is why any African leader that sees the liberation struggle beyond the mere formal issue of self-government is

billed for assassination. This is why from Felix Moumie through Patrice Lumumba, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Edward Mondlane to Amilcar Cabral, many radical African and Black leaders have died at the hands of imperialism and its collaborators.

The political independence of an African country, rapid economic development of an African country relying mainly on her own resources and her own men, the nationalisation of any imperialist enterprise by an African country: all these are a boost to the liberation forces of the Third World. And the proclamation of the socialist road and the committal of material and people to this road by an African leadership as has been done in Algeria, Somalia, Nasser's Egypt, Tanzania, Keita's Mali, Nkrumah's Ghana, Guinea, Congo, Dahomey, Ethiopia and lately liberated Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique is an accretion of strength to the mounting forces of liberation everywhere in the world.

Experience has shown that mere nominal political independence does not necessarily weaken imperialism or free a country from its hold. On the contrary, paper independence can be a means by which imperialism strengthens itself in a world situation where it is faced with a universal assault of the peoples and is forced to devise several tactics of survival.

Capitalist imperialism oppresses a country not in one form only but in several forms. There is colonialism and there is semi-colonialism. A semi-colonial country is one that is nominally independent but where imperialism has strong footholds in the economy. Correspondingly in such a country imperialism has powerful allies among the national elite who are ready to see the interests of their country as tied up with the interests of some imperialist power or set of powers. There need be no formal treaties embodying the terms of semi-colonialism which has come in recent years to known under the name of neo-colonialism.

Nigeria is a semi-colonial or neo-colonial country. That means that Nigeria economy and politics by and large serve the interests of imperialism. It means that in government, in business, in education, in politics - in all aspects of national life - imperialism, and especially British imperialism, has powerful allies serving its interest or ready to come to its aid.

Let us take a recent example. A British visitor to Nigeria returned and wrote an article in the 'Times' of London criticising the economic policies of the Gowon government. There are many Nigerian economists in Nigeria and abroad who are not civil servants. Not one of these felt sufficiently inspired to defend Nigerian government policy. It was left to four

representatives of British big business in Nigeria to answer the article on behalf of Nigeria and the Nigerian government! of course, they lauded the neo-colonial policies of the present regime to the skies. That shows whose interest is being served by the direction of Nigerian economic policies. Even with oil the country remains a slave of foreign interests; industrialisation, much desired by patriots, is left to the convenience and caprice of foreign fortune hunter; the masses sweat and starve; inflation knaws daily at the standard of living of eighty million helpless people; at the same time huge profits rising to the skies pile up in the swelling accounts of expatriate monopolies and their local agents. Which colonialist would not rush to defend such a policy?

Lastly, let us take the question of an egalitarian society'. The Nigerian governments have said much about building 'a just and egalitarian society where no one is oppressed'. What we see daily, however, is that the country is growing more and more unequal and there is more and more injustice. As for ordinary toilers in town and country, they are no less oppressed than they were under colonial rule.

If Tanzania, for instance, had to wait for the Nigerian example in building 'a just egalitarian society' it would wait till doom's day and in the mean time get as thoroughly rotten at heart as Nigeria.

If it is sweet to seek the applause of suffering humanity by holding up to them the glitters of a 'just and egalitarian society' it is only honest that we do something about it. By trying to create another United States of America in the world, Nigeria is setting up the obsolete as an example to be emulated. One would have thought that this celebrated hob of a double slave trade, this giant of the world's most cheated race, this lucky land endowed by nature with all the resources for a new civilization - one would have thought that this country would blaze the trail in the building of a just and egalitarian society on the African continent. It is a shame that we, whose ancestors had known all the benefits of traditional forms of egalitarianism should be the people falling over ourselves to take over a decadent culture which the vast majority in the lands where that culture was born are already poised to cast into the limbo.

Given the present limitations and opportunities in the world, a just and egalitarian society can be but a socialist society. Deep down in his heart every man is an egalitarian, a socialist. For there is no one who likes to be an underdog

of another, no man who loves to live at the mercy of another, no single person who has ever said "I want to be cheated!" no human who would not want to be equal with another, no soul who admires injustice to himself.

A just and egalitarian society such as the present leadership declares it wants for Nigeria is not the beautiful invention of any utopian; it is simply the practical antithesis of exploitative society. The more we depart from the course that leads to it the less we can offer to the Third World that is at all worthy of emulation.

Socialism, the theoretical and practical road to a just and egalitarian society, has only just started its career in the World. Where it is being attempted, it is not free from imperfections. Nevertheless, it offers far-reaching opportunities for radically rebuilding the world towards deeper and larger freedoms. Those countries whose leaderships have had the necessary historical insight to seek rather than merely chant about a just and egalitarian society are bringing new solutions to enrich the construction of man's next progressive step in the mastery of his environment and the administration of his affairs.

Capitalism is historically a decadent road. The imperialists who seek to maintain it are like the slave owners of the nineteenth century: men who want to continue to live on the sweat of others; men who look behind. The leaders of the underdeveloped countries who opt for the capitalist road are like the 'good slaves' of the nineteenth century: men who prefer the passive existence of known slavery to the challenges of a new, free life.

The Unassumed Tasks

The older generation of leaders had fought for nominal independence for Nigeria.

The present generation of leaders are concerned with building a neo-colonial capitalism in Nigeria. Just as the masses resented their sufferings under colonialism so are they now resenting their sufferings under the new dispensation.

If the Gowon government is losing in popularity, as everyone has observed, it is not because it is a military regime; it is because it is a regime that perpetuates all exploitations, discriminations, sufferings and oppressions that millions of people and thousands of patriots want to get rid of. It is because rather than fulfil its promise of a just and egalitarian society, it is doing the opposite.

The world is not in the nineteenth century when capitalism

was the only direction of social construction for any country wanting to modernise. Since the Bolshevik Revolution and especially since the rise of the socialist world system, the world has seen that a modern leadership need not follow the model of social change that leads to a capitalist solution, implying as it does the division of the country into rich and poor, millionaire employers and propertyless employees, powerful and powerless and all the other discriminations, injustices, miseries, contradictions and conflicts associated with such a culture.

The masses of the Third World are rejecting this alternative. The masses of Nigeria are bound to reject it. Their widespread grumbling, though unorganised, already registers a rejection. The social vision of the present leadership falls short of meeting the cardinal demands of the world situation. In many respects, far from playing any inspiring role in the Third World, the post-independence Nigeria leadership has at best tailed behind more imaginative and courageous leaders; at worst it has played a role that is a serious disservice to the Third World.

A country's role in the Third World is not defined by the appropriateness of this or that solution to this or that specific problem taken piece meal. It is a matter of the total philosophy inspiring policies. Cuba and Vietnam are not inspiring Latin America and Asia in particular and the Third World in general by the cleverness of this or that action on this or that issue. Their inspiration lies in the philosophy defining the total course to which their leaders have committed their nations. That also can be said of Kwame Nkrumah who, whatever his faults, was a great torch bearer of liberation for Africa and the Third World.

I believe in inspiration all along the line. I believe, for instance, that an inspired student will work five times as hard and ten times as well as an uninspired one.

In the situation facing Third World countries, one and all they need must take a giant social revolutionary leap if they are not to remain hewers of wood and drawers of water in a world where their exploiters are running ahead in material power faster than the capitalistically inclined countries of the Third World. That mandatory leap is not going to be a merely economic one. In fact, a country like Cuba or Vietnam with the most advanced political philosophy is potentially more advanced than, say, the United States, plagued as she is with all the problems of social decadence.

The present discontent of the Nigerian masses points the task for the younger generation of educated Nigerians. That

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That discontent, as we have said, registers the failure of insight in the post-independence leadership as a whole.

It is useless to warn, as Dr. Azikiwe did a few weeks ago, that the present elite ruling Nigeria must not remain blind to the sufferings of the people and must offer them a sort of philanthropic relief. How the present elite is to put this philanthropy into practice Dr. Azikiwe did not prescribe. What is positive in Dr. Azikiwe's observations however, is his recognition of the gross inadequacies of the present leadership. His criticism was aimed at helping the leadership preserve its exalted position rather than saving the people.

But Dr. Azikiwe and others are behind time. The age of philanthropy is gone. What the masses want is not anyone's help but their own liberation. They do not want crumbs condescendingly offered from the master's table, however philanthropic the gesture. They want a just and egalitarian society as a birth right to which they are entitled by virtue of their humanity.

By analysing the failures of the present leadership, the demands of freedom in the present epoch and the opportunities before Nigeria, you will be able to find a road to a just and egalitarian society that will be Nigerian and authentic. This will be your contribution to solving the fundamental problems of the Third World.

One warning is necessary, however. It is not sufficient; it is even misleading to glorify Nigerian university students as 'future leaders'. Leadership may be glorious or mediocre, creditable or discreditable. The masses are bound to reject a discreditable leadership. Mere guns cannot convince them that a corrupt and exploitative set of careerists have a right to rule. If you are thinking of leadership, it is as well to think of one that will be a lasting credit to the Black race and the Third World. This country has seen enough of mediocrity and disgrace.

WHAT I HAVE DONE

In this discussion I have not pretended that categories such as imperialism, colonialism, socialism, capitalism, the people, misery, exploitation, oppression etc. do not exist. I have not resorted to the obscure euphemisms preferred by the scholars of imperialism and those who mimic them on the Nigeria level. I have not pretended that sitting on the fence on issues that involve the lives of millions has anything to do with scientific objectivity. On the contrary, the practice of dodging issues with a thousand equivocations and verbose euphemisms is a moral weakness: it conceals hypocrisy, scholarstics, irresponsibility, and sometimes plain dishonesty.

I prefer to speak the truth in all its nakedness as I see it. That truth, suppressed a thousand times, will surface again. Vietnam dramatised the human issues involved in the destiny of the Third World. She dramatised the invincibility of a people with a will to be free. The abolition of all exploitation of man by man, implying the abolition of all national, racial and class oppression: that is the issue before the Third World. The role of a country or a leadership is determined by the position it assumes in the world-wide struggle against imperialism and all forms of exploitation.

Criteria for leadership outlined

A LECTURER, Mr. Eskor Toyo has alleged that the Nigerian leadership consisted by the rule of people whose social conscience and patriotism ranged from "nil to minimal".

He was therefore, of the opinion that the present government would not achieve peace and stability for the nation neither would it succeed in eradicating corruption, tribalism, greed and sectionalism nor succeed in generating the will to render sacrifices for the progress of the nation.

At a lecture delivered as part of the National Union of North East Students' Convention at Maiduguri on Monday evening, Mr. Eskor Toyo of the North East College of Arts and Science also lamented that this nation could not offer any meaningful leadership to the so-called Third World as she herself was bedevilled by vices which retarded the progress of any nation.

The Military Governor of North Eastern State, Brigadier

Musa Usman was chairman at the lecture which was read on Mr. Toyo's behalf by Malam Mohammed Dahiru. Defending his observations, Mr. Toyo, who is now away in Moscow, told the students that Nigeria was capitalist oriented and that capitalism generates and perpetuates greed and corruption.

He said "because Nigeria pursues a policy of capitalist development, her policy is to accommodate imperialism as far as it is possible".

NEW NIGERIAN

24 JULY 1975